REMARKS

Claims 1-19, 21-23, 25-27, 29-35, and 38-44 will be in the application for further prosecution after entry of the above amendments. Claims 1-16, 29-35, and 38 have been allowed. Claims 8, 9, 17, 21-23, 25, and 27 have been amended and claims 20, 24, 28, 36 and 37 have been cancelled. New claims 38-44 have been added.

Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 as being indefinite. In fact, the claim was not completed. That oversight has been corrected in the above amendment, placing the claim in condition for allowance.

One typographical error was found on page 11 of the specification. It was corrected in the above amendment.

Claims 17, 19, 20, and 22-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Savolainen et al (Savolainen). The reference discloses a chain design in which the female end is integral, that is, it does not have links that are formed of two separate members. The Savolainen links have bosses at the male end that can be separated so that they can engage the integral female end. As now claimed, the female end of the second link of the Applicant's chain has a boss which receives the boss of the male end of the male end of the first link. Therefore, the chain should no longer be considered to be anticipated by the Savolainen chain. Consistent with the amendment of Claim 17, Claim 20 has been cancelled. Claim 21 has been indicated to be allowable, so Claims 17-19 and 21 should now be in condition for allowance. Further, it is noted that Claim 21 has been amended to emphasize a feature of the new chain design, that is, that the pin joining the male and female bosses does not bear the forces applied to the chain.

There are other features of the Savolainen chain design that distinguish it from that of the Applicant's chain. The Savolainen chain appears to be inherently a light duty design. Since the female end is integral, the male end must be spread significantly, which means that the fit of the male bosses with the female end must be less accurate and the load distributed less uniformly. In the Applicant's design, each link is made in two pieces so that it can be assembled without bending, although the polymer members can be bent if necessary, as stated in cancelled Claim

24. A feature of the Savolainen design is the interlocking of shoulders 11 and 12 with slots 7 and 8. No similar feature is used in the Applicant's new design.

Claims 18, 36, and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable (i.e. obvious) over Savolainen in view of Christmas. Claim 18 should be allowable if Claim 17 as amended has overcome the rejection discussed above. Claims 36 and 37 have been cancelled. The differences between the Savolainen chain design and that of the Applicants have been discussed above. Christmas is relied on for the use of a sleeve bearing. The Christmas chain is clearly much different from that of the present chain. Furthermore, it is not a polymer chain design. The inner and outer link plates are joined by a pin, which will carry the loads imposed on the chain, a feature that is contrary to the Applicant's design in which the pin does not carry loads, which instead are imposed on the joined male and female bosses. Finally, the Christmas chain includes both inner and outer rollers, which are not found in the present chain design. The mere presence of a sleeve bearing does not suggest that the Christmas chain design could be combined with that of Savolainen.

In view of the amendments and the above remarks the Examiner is asked to reconsider his previous rejections and to allow the claims as amended. If he believes that further amendment may be necessary, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

2/7/04
Date

Harold N. Wells
Reg. No. 26,044
Jenkens & Gilchrist, P.C.
225 West Washington Street, Suite 2600
Chicago, IL 60606-3418
Attorneys for Applicant
Tel.: (312) 425-8610